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ABSTRACT

The experiences of Puerto Rican migrants in New York City and elsewhere are unique when compared to those of other minority groups. The Puerto Ricans, in general, are disinclined to assimilate into the dominant American culture, and this phenomenon is closely connected to Puerto Rico's political and economic relationship to the United States. Because its political status is a colonial one, Puerto Rico's inhabitants can migrate easily (relative to immigrant groups) to the United States. This ease of movement, however, encourages their lack of assimilation, and many who come to the United States in search of jobs eventually return to Puerto Rico. The Puerto Ricans who came to the United States in the 1950s, for example, found jobs in sectors that had the lowest wages and fewest opportunities for advancement and that soon experienced the greatest loss of jobs as the economy began to contract (because of automation, exclusionary union practices and other factors). Thus, this group was encouraged to leave the work force, to seek public assistance, and to return to Puerto Rico. Further research is needed to understand the impact, if any, of Puerto Ricans' high rate of intermarriage and female-headed households on the community's assimilation. The community will inevitably change but its social and economic ghettoization is likely to persist for a long time. A four-page list of references concludes the document. (KH)

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ASSIMILATION IN THE PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITIES OF THE US: A NEW FOCUS

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Introduction

A few years ago (1972), I conducted a series of interviews with Puerto Ricans in the New York area.* I asked this socioeconomically varied group of first and second generation Puerto Ricans to respond to a number of questions which attempted to detect orientations toward assimilation. The responses indicated a surprisingly high degree of pro Puerto Rican sentiment. This held true across generational and leadership groups. Respondents identified overwhelmingly as "Puerto Rican," stated strong preferences for Puerto Rican grandchildren, for residence in Puerto Rico, for latin music, and for bilingual education. The overwhelming majority of this group opted for biculturation as a desirable community goal, i. e., that the Puerto Rican "take from both cultures." Only three respondents (of a total of 52) felt that the Puerto Rican community should "mix in with the rest of New York as far as its culture was concerned." Thus, and on the whole, the expressed attitudes of the respondents toward the retention of Puerto Rican-ness was quite strong.

The subjective attitudes uncovered in these interviews appear to be buttressed by more objective conditions. These objective conditions appear to reinforce what has been termed a "disinclination to assimilate." It is clear, and it becomes clearer with each passing census and study, that relative to the White population, and to other minority groups, Puerto Ricans are not progressing as rapidly as other groups in the U. S. These measures of "making it" in the society indicate a rather serious maladjustment between Puerto Ricans and the U. S. society. Whether these objective conditions are cause or consequence of the disinclination to assimilate needs further study. The fact remains, however, that little socioeconomic mobility can easily lead to dissatisfaction with American society and perhaps a continuing disinclination to assimilate.

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* See Rodriguez, C. (1975a).

As almost all writers in this area have noted, the Puerto Rican community in the U. S. is very unique.* It is this "uniqueness" that has made it so difficult to effectively capture within Northamerican constructs the reality of the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S.** It is perhaps worth highlighting at this point some of the cultural and historical characteristics that make Puerto Ricans so unique.

The unique cultural characteristics of Puerto Ricans often cited are: the racial mixture and racial attitudes of Puerto Ricans;***the status of citizenship; the accessibility of the homeland; the historic, cultural and psychological resistance to assimilation built up over the years as a result of prolonged periods of political dependency; the distinguishing and still firmly held cultural views on "dignidad," on religion, and on spiritualism; and lastly, the nature of intermarriage in the Puerto Rican community.

Often cited historical factors making Puerto Ricans unique are: the contracting state of the economy when Puerto Ricans arrived and its present depressed state; the social movements of the sixties, i. e., the Black movement, the social protest of predominantly White hippies and of radicals, the movement for bilingual education; and government policy changes, i.e., the "Great Society" and the "War on Poverty" emphases.

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* The following works have all focused on the Puerto Rican community in the U. S. as a unique phenomena: Chenault (1938), Gosnell (1945), Mills (1950), Padilla (1958), Rand (1958), Handlin (1959), Wakefield (1959), Senior (1965), Sexton (1965), Lewis, O.(1968), Glazer & Moynihan (1970), Fitzpatrick (1971), Wagenheims (1971), Lopez (1973), and Lopez (1974).

** See Rodriguez, C. (1974a and 1974b) where specific examples of this problem are analyzed.

*** See Rodriguez, C. (1974c) for a more in-depth analysis of the unique nature of Puerto Rican racial attitudes and North American perceptions.

These factors were not present at the time that previous immigrant groups arrived, but were very much a part of the climate affecting Puerto Ricans in the U. S. These social and economic forces can be seen to be material forces affecting the accomodation pattern of Puerto Ricans in the U. S. As I have argued elsewhere, placed within the context of American colonialism and racism, these factors will cause the Puerto Rican migration to follow a very different accomodation pattern than that which has been followed by white immigrant groups or by nonwhite ethnic groups.*

These cultural and historical characteristics must be seen in the context of the dominant structural fact of Puerto Rico's political and economic dependence on the U. S., i. e., the colonial tie. It is this colonial tie, or the consequences of this tie, which has been most important in triggering migration flows. Indeed, but for the colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the U. S., Puerto Rican migration would not have occurred in the way or to the same degree that it has. It is the object of this paper to examine the political-economic relationship between Puerto Rico and the U. S., the effects of this relationship on migration and its effects on the development of Puerto Rican communities in the U. S.

In one sense, the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S. represent the discarded surplus population that evolved as a result of major capitalist transformations in Puerto Rico.** As has been stated elsewhere, "it was this surplus population that could not be integrated into the capital intensive industrializing economy of Puerto Rico, that became

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* See Rodriguez, C. (1974d).

** See Bonilla & Campos (1977) for an extended recount of how capital and labor transfers between Puerto Rico and the U. S. have led to the migration of Puerto Rican people over the last century; and have led to the financing and consolidation of Northamerican hegemony in Puerto Rico and the region.

in the main, the Puerto Rican migration to the U. S."* As we shall se the colonial tie not only prompted but also facilitated the migration. In addition, the colonial tie has served to politicize the issues inherent in assimilation.

Generally when migrant or immigrant groups in the U. S. are studied, the effects of the migration are analyzed: Have the immigrants improved their socio-economic positions? lost the use of thier mother tongue? returned in great numbers to their homeland? intermarried to any significant degree? dispersed residentially? developed primary or secondary relations with other groups? established integrated friendship networks? The causes of the migration are seldom given more than a cursory examination. In the case of Puerto Ricans, the causes of the migration are highly significant but equally ignored. For the causes of the migration are highly political in nature and are also intricately related to the economic functioning of the U. S. Further Puerto Rican migration is sustained by these very structural political and economic factors.

By looking at the structural causes of migration, i. e., the political economic context of colonialism and capitalism, we should be better able to understand the effects of the Puerto Rican migration. By focusing on the structural underpinnings of migration, we will also have a better sense of the independent variables involved, while viewing as dependent the changes that Puerto Rican communities experience. The political and economic ties have greatly affected the extent and nature of migration to the U. S. These ties continue to affect the development of the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S. They should, thus, be taken into account in any analysis of Puerto Rican migration Let us now turn to a consideration of these structural variables.

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* Rodriguez, 1975b, p. 10.

Political Ties to the U. S.

Most North Americans and many Puerto Ricans do not often reflect on the colonial status of Puerto Rico. Indeed, but for the FALN bombings and occassional coverage in Puerto Rican "specials", the colonial status issue seldom reaches the mass media's center stage. President Ford's departing comments on statehood for Puerto Rico proved, by the uproar it caused, how exceptional such references are. Despite the lack of acknowledged awareness, the fact remains that Puerto Rico is still treated like a colony and that it still functions and acts like a colony. Notwithstanding the colonial haze, Puerto Ricans are still, as a result, foreign citizens in the U. S.; and, Puerto Ricans still, as a result, migrate freely between Puerto Rico and the U. S. In fact, but for the colonial tie, neither the size of the migration nor the peculiar back and forth movement that continues today would have been possible.

There were and are, of course, other factors which facilitated the migration. For example, the accessibility (in terms of cost and frequency) of air travel between Puerto Rico and N. Y. in the 40s, 50s and at present. Or, the U. S. Army experience of Puerto Ricans in W. W. II, which oriented

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* Two recent examples of "specials" on the Puerto Rican issue were David Diaz's hosting of a half hour television analysis of Puerto Rico's election results (NBC, 3/77) and Geraldo Rivera's half hour focus on how Puerto Rico's economic difficulties prompt migration (7/77, ABC)

and taught many Puerto Ricans English and inculcated a desire to come to the U. S. Or, the spread of the media, i. e., radios, movies, and now television. But to what extent would these factors have arisen or evolved but for the tie between Puerto Rico and the U. S.? Why didn't Cubans or Dominicans migrate in the numbers that Puerto Ricans did? or instead of Puerto Ricans?

When the "blessings of citizenship" were "bestowed" on Puerto Ricans in 1917, the paraphernalia of passports and visas was eliminated. Puerto Ricans became, along with some Native American Indians in 1921, part of that anomalous grouping of non-English speaking people called U. S. citizens or Americans. The reality, of course, was that such a status was clearly second class. It existed as a legal fiction; it was to be the means by which Puerto Rican labor was purchased, cheap. It was, of course, what underwrote the ticket to the big town--New York City.

An interesting commentary on the citizenship status is that, despite the potential that citizenship holds for political organization (by Puerto Ricans and non Puerto Ricans) the reality has been that Puerto Ricans have usually been disenfranchised, generally unrecognized, or unattractive as a potential, organized political force.* Thus, even in matters where political exploitation might have been advantageous, Puerto Ricans in the U. S. have been overlooked. Citizenship counted only in, or for, the migration.

The point here is not to sound the bitter cry of an oppressed people whose oppression continues with migration to the colonial country. This has been done and it has been done most adeptly.**

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* Vito Marcoantonio was the exception that proved the rule.

** See for example, Silen (1971), Maldonado Denis (1972) and A. Lopez (1973).

The point is, however, to underscore how Puerto Rico's relationship to the U. S. has facilitated and continues to facilitate the constant migration back and forth between Puerto Rico and the U. S. Although this point seems simplistic and obvious when underscored; it is a basic point not generally taken into account by the migrants or by the analizers of Puerto Rican migrants.

To further understand this point, consider what would happen if Puerto Rico became independent. If Puerto Rico were independent that migration flow would most probably desist. On the other hand, if Puerto Rico were to become a state, the flow might reverse itself; it might have more Americans or second generation Puerto Ricans returning to Puerto Rico; or it might have more businesses leaving; it would, most probably, have a series of consequences for migration. In both cases, what would the consequences for Puerto Rican assimilation in the U. S. be? With independence, would the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S. be more isolated, become more assimilated, to the U. S.? With statehood would Puerto Rico become more assimilated and thus be less of a preserver of Puerto Rican culture? With statehood, would the Puerto Rican people migrating to the U. S. be less of a <u>new</u> cultural infusion to the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S.--thus accelerating assimilation in the U. S.--Puerto Rican communities? Would fewer Puerto Ricans migrate to and from Puerto Rico?

Whatever the answers to these questions, it is clear that the present political relationship is highly influential. It appears to maximize the flow of migration, for migration is fairly unregulated by the respective governments and responds in large part to fluctuating economic conditions on the island and in the U. S. Thus, as long as the present political rela-

tionship is maintained, the future course of Puerto Rican communities in the U. S. will to a large extent be affected by the continuous flow back and forth of migrants. (It has been said, somewhat in jest, that despite the fact that the Puerto Rican community in New York is over 50 years old it is impossible to find a discernible third generation group--because their parents, or they, return to Puerto Rico.)

Thus, the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S. are said to retain greater ties to Puerto Rican-ness. This is not to say the communities do not change. They do, slowly, and often in directions that continue to demarcate them from other communities. Note for example the growth of what are today Puerto Rican "cuchifrito" stands, social clubs and after-hours clubs. These and other institutions did not exist years ago or existed in a very different form. Today they are identifying symbols of a Puerto Rican neighborhood. This same phenomena of change is also reflected in the speech of many second generation Puerto Ricans who no longer speak continuous Spanish, but whose English is decidedly "Rican."

Thus, the significance of the present political tie between Puerto Rico and the U. S. may "appear" unrelated to the development of Puerto Rican communities in the U. S.; but it has had and will continue to have significance for the future of Puerto Rican communities. Any change in this relationship will also greatly alter the course that Puerto Rican communities in the U. S. will follow.

Colonialism Politicizes Issues Inherent in Assimilation

Interestingly enough, the colonial relationship has come to serve another purpose--that of making many Puerto Ricans raised in the U. S. more aware of their roots. The Young Lords, the Puerto Rican Studies programs, the exile of leftists Puerto Rican political intellectuals to New York, the organizing efforts of various political organizations (some of which are off-shoots from Puerto Rico (e. g., the Puerto Rican Socialist Party or the PSP) and others, which are indigenous to the New York Puerto Rican community (PRSU or the Puerto Rican Student Union, and El Comite)) have all played a very significant role in raising the consciousness or the awareness of young Puerto Ricans unfamiliar with Puerto Rico or with the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the U. S. The absence of Puerto Rican Studies programs or departments in Puerto Rico underscores the uniqueness of this response in the "diaspora."*

These developments have made for, or have been combined with, identity-reinforcing orientations that have resulted, in many cases, in the reaffirmation of Puerto Rican-ness or Puerto Rican-hood in the U. S. The number of bookstores in New York primarily dedicated to distributing works dealing with Puerto Rican political issues is a new phenomena--as is the inclusion in neighborhood and university libraries of such works. Similarly note the development and presentation of Puerto Rican street and off-Broadway drama that deals directly with political-social issues. Also organized artistic efforts in silk-screening, photography, and poetry indicate strong political themes that speak to the colonial tie. Again, to what extent would these development have occurred but for the tie between Puerto Rico and the U. S.?

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* This term was first used by Lopez (1974) to refer to the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S.

The Economic Structure

Closely related to the fact of colonial status is Puerto Rico's economic dependency on the U. S. Whether cause or consequence of the political tie between Puerto Rico and the U. S., the fact remains that Puerto Rico's economy is, and has been, for quite some time subject to, and dependent on, the U. S. economy.* The changes the Puerto Rican economy has experienced since 1898--from the diversified subsistence agricultural economy, to the one-crop sugar economy, to the capital-intensive manufacturing and tourist economy of today have all been directly tied to U. S. business investments and control. These changes, often times encouraged by the colonial governments of Puerto Rico, have had significant social consequences. One of the most significant, and yet unacknowledged, consequences has been the creation of a large, surplus, population in Puerto Rico. It was this surplus population that formed the bulk of the Puerto Rican migration to the U. S.

Although some work has been done on the analysis of push and pull factors in the migration of Puerto Ricans, most of this work does not generally address itself to the issue of the relationship between politics, economy and migration.** Perhaps the classic study in this area is Friedlander (1965). He studies the Puerto Rican migration within the very traditionalist

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* For those of you unfamiliar with the extent of Puerto Rico's economic dependency on the U. S., see: Campos & Bonilla (1976), Maldonando Denis (1972), Lewis (1964) and Lens (1977).

** The following speak to the relationship between Puerto Rican migration and economic factors: Gernes (1956), Helfgott (1958), Senior (1953, 1955, and 1966), Senior & Watkins (1954), Baer (1962), Fleisher (1963), Carleton (1960), and Business Week (1944).

framework that it is assumed all previous immigrant groups have followed--that of migration because, or for, "greater economic opportunity." Thus, he finds significant correlations between increases in U. S. GNP levels and increases in Puerto Rican migration to the U. S. The inverse relationship between unemployment changes in the U. S. and Puerto Rican migration to the U. S. is also fairly well established. The conclusion then made is that Puerto Rican migrants do come in response to expanding opportunities in the U. S. Puerto Ricans are, in effect, "pulled" to the U. S.--as were most previous immigrant groups.

The "push" phenomena, i. e., whether Puerto Ricans are forced to leave Puerto Rico because of high unemployment rates, or low GNP in Puerto Rico, has been less adequately studied.* (It is perhaps a question of less interest to the financial and/or academic backers of studies.) Changes in the Puerto Rican economy reflect changes in the U. S. economy. Thus, when unemployment rises in the U. S., it rises faster in Puerto Rico; when the economy slows up in the U. S., it grounds almost to a halt in Puerto Rico.

Thus, because of the "unique" political relationship Puerto Rico has with the U. S., there has evolved a peculiar meshing of economies that confuse or correlate the push and pull factors affecting migration. This

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* Rita Maldonado (1976) is an exception in this respect. By using ratios (of, for example, annual unemployment rates in Puerto Rico and in four states in the U. S.) she indicates she is cognizant of the extent to which economic push and pull factors are correlated in the Puerto Rican case. She uses similar ratios for manufacturing wage rates, welfare payments and unemployment compensation payments.

interlacing of economies and its consequent effects on migration does not appear to be unusual in colonial situations. As Blaut has said:

> Imperialism has evolved and changed...and one of its newer modes of appropriation, exploitation and oppression is the forced migration of tens of millions of workers to the imperialist heartlands.*

The Puerto Rican migration parallels that of many colonial and neo-colonial migrations where the surplus labor migrates to the imperialist center, and becomes part of the lower working class (whether employed or not).

Within this situation, Puerto Rican migration must be seen as resulting from pull factors relative to push factors. In other words, if a Puerto Rican is unemployed in Puerto Rico, a perceived improvement in employment opportunities in the U. S. will be much more likely to induce him to migrate than if he were employed in Puerto Rico. Experiential reports of migrants I worked with, lived with, or interviewed, indicate that most migrants come because of combined push and pull factors. An actual job opening is, of course, strong incentive to migrate--but it is even stronger when a desire or need to leave has already been formed.

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* Blaut (1977:50-51).

Puerto Ricans and Previous Immigrating Labor

When Puerto Ricans arrived, if they were able to find jobs, they got the lowest paying, lowest status, most unstable jobs with the least possible amount of mobility. Most Puerto Ricans were, thus, almost automatically made members of the lowest level of proletariats and lumpen proletariats, regardless of their skill or educational background.

This has been the fate of most previous immigrant groups to the U. S.--- that of providing cheap labor power for the maintenance and expansion of capitalist industry. With time these previous immigrant groups (or their children) experienced mobility thus leaving behind their working class origins (and income and education) and "taking on" middle class, American Waspish ways. Today, however, there is considerable question over whether such a movement will be repeated by Puerto Ricans.* For the relationship that Puerto Ricans have to the economic structure differs from that which previous immigrant groups had in a number of ways.

First, Puerto Ricans are not immigrants, but are technically migrants. Thus, their chances of returning to their place of origin may be greater than was the case for previous immigrant groups whose mother countries were less accessible in terms of money, time, and legal processing. In a sense, Puerto Ricans have a greater option to leave the work force, and its socializing effects, for good or, for greater periods of time than was the case for most previous immigrant groups.

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* There is also question over the extent to which all previous immigrant groups underwent this process. In addition to the issue of differential mobility rates for different groups, there is also a question on the extent to which all previous immigrant groups have assimilated. (See Valentin's discussion on "the bicultural continuum" (1972), and "voluntary ethnicity" (1977).

Secondly, Puerto Ricans arrive(d) at a time, not of expansion, but of a beginning contraction in the economy. Those areas where Puerto Ricans found jobs were those sectors that would experience the greatest loss of jobs; and that had, in addition, to the traditional low wage levels of immigrants, the least opportunity for advancement. Thus, Puerto Ricans may be forced to leave the work force more often than previous immigrant groups.

Sectoral decline, suburbanization of industry and people, automation and blue-collor structural unemployment, and exclusionary (or protective) union practices are all economic factors that were not present when previous immigrant groups came. They functioned in the following way to adversely affect the economic situation of Puerto Ricans. Automation and the movement of surviving blue-collar jobs to the suburbs, the South and other countries, have caused a sectoral decline in the number of manufacturing jobs available in New York City. Since these trends occurred more rapidly than out migration or retraining of blue-collar workers to fill white-collar jobs, a severe problem of blue-collar structural unemployment arose in New York City. Because of racial and ethnic prejudice, restrictive union policies, inadequate educational opportunities, and the restriction of Puerto Ricans from government employment, Puerto Ricans bore the brunt of this blue-collar structural unemployment.* These factors affected severely the unemployment of Puerto Ricans, the need to receive public assistance, and the tendency to return to Puerto Rico.

Thirdly, the Puerto Rican migration, contrary to the migration of most previous immigrant groups was, to a large extent, influenced by U. S. activity

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* See Rodriguez, C. (1975) for a more in-depth analysis of these factors.

in Puert, Rico. Although previous immigrant groups may have to a certain extent been recruited by firms, as were certain groups of Puerto Ricans, e. g., farm labor, only Puerto Ricans were pushed to come because of U. S. "economic development" in Puerto Rico. Thus, Puerto Rican migrants were, to a large extent, displaced from economic activity in Puerto Rico because of the capital-intensive nature of economic development there. Ironically, while Mayor Wagner of New York City was in San Juan, Puerto Rico, encouraging Puerto Ricans to come to New York where jobs were "Plentiful"* the government of Puerto Rico was encouraging U. S. businessmen to come to Puerto Rico to establish capital intensive, tax-free industries. To speak metaphorically, Operation Bootstrap became "Operation Big Foot" and the unusable or surplus Puerto Ricans were kicked to the U. S.

Thus as long as Puerto Rico and the U. S. pursue the economic course that has thus far been chartered, there will be a need for the Puerto Rican economy to have an escape valve for its surplus population. As long as this is the case, Puerto Ricans will continue to come and join the lower ranks of the working or non-working class.

Economic Ghettoization, Racism and Assimilation

It appears further that the ghettoization of Puerto Ricans, i. e., residential, occupational, educational and consequently, social ghettoization will probably not be greatly altered for a number of reasons. Most importantly, are the economic facts of life--Puerto Ricans will most likely not have the economic means to move to areas where other Puerto Rican (or similarly oppressed people) do not live. Nor does it appear that Puerto Ricans, because

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* New York Times, June 27, 1954, "Puerto Rico Faces Two Big Problems."

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of continued low educational and skill levels, will be able to enter new areas. It appears Puerto Ricans will be confined to those low-paying areas where Puerto Ricans are now concentrated. Given this occupational segregation (or ghettoization), educational, residential, and social segregation will most likely continue.

Lastly, racial discrimination will continue to persist in all these areas and the great heterogeneity of Puerto Rican racial types will also continue to persist. This heterogeneity will favor some individuals in the Puerto Rican community with certain opportunities; it will act to generally disfavor the whole community's chances of mobility and will serve to sustain or increase the degree to which the community is ghettoized. What consequences does this have for the assimilation of the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S.? It is clear that the mobility of Puerto Ricans has been slow. Recent data indicate that the prospects for Puerto Rican mobility will continue to be low.* Thus, it appears that objective material conditions for assimilation vis a vis economic or educational mobility are slight.

Intermarriage and Female-Headed Households as Counter-Balancing Factors

It has long been hypothesized that intermarriage is a vehicle for social mobility. Does the high rate of intermarriage within the Puerto Rican commu-

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* The following recent summaries of government data indicate a less than optimistic economic picture. Data from a forthcoming, comprehensive report by the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights indicates that, even relative to other minorities, Puerto Ricans are not making great strides in the economic and educational area. See Wagenheim (1975), U. S. Commission on Civil Rights (1976), and Aspira (1977).

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nities indicate a raising of social-economic status and an assimilative tendency?* Further research is needed in this area.

Puerto Rico is a culture that has historically had high rates of intermarriage both on the island and in the U. S. communities. What effect does this historical pattern of intermarriage have upon inter-marriage in the U. S.? Are Puerto Ricans assimilating non-Puerto Ricans? and therefore creating more Puerto Ricans? Who is marrying out? those with higher SES scores, i. e., those already mobile? the child-rearors, i. e., are more Puerto Rican women than men marrying out? the lighter Puerto Ricans? the darker? To what extent will or does Puerto Rican intermarriage follow the Black model, wherein, by census and by cultural definition, the offspring are considered Black regardless of phenotype?

Is the high number and proportion of female-headed Puerto Rican households a greater factor in determing the assimilation of the community? What will be the effects of such a situation on the future of Puerto Rican adults? All of these questions await answers and intensive research.

Speculations

It seems safe, however, to speculate that as long as Puerto Ricans remain in the same relative economic positions--and this has been the case for the last 20 years--Puerto Ricans will probably not become (and perhaps do not want to become) the americanized, middle class, citizens that some awaited. There will be a change, but what kind of a change it is difficult to say.

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* Fitzpatrick (1960), Jaffe & Carreras Carleton (1974) and Jaffe & Cullen (1975) have all shown very high rates of intermarriage within the Puerto Rican community.

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Each ethnic group's practical definitions of what is "ethnic" changes, so that what was "Puerto Rican" 20 years ago is not quite what "Puerto Rican" is today. The basic premise of distinction or difference is, however, generally retained. Often what a Black is, what a Native American Indian is, is reduced to a gestalt conception that is affectively charged and understood and sometimes labelled with words such as "soul," "spirituality," and "salsa." Within this developed context, the question of whether a Puerto Rican can speak Spanish--although important to many--becomes subsidiary.

I am reminded of the young Native American Indian woman sitting in the door of her shack talking about how she would go to the long house to learn her language and the dances of her heritage. There was no question in this young woman's mind--nor in that of her neighbors--that she was Black Foot, despite the fact that she did not speak the language, nor know the dances. There was also no question that her children would be Indian too.

Summary

We have covered the impact or influence of the political and economic relationship between Puerto Rico and the U. S. We have shown these structural underpinnings to be of great significance in the creation and development of the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S. The consequences of migration, i. e., ghettoization, low incomes or no jobs, an inferior educational system, systematic racism, etc., appear to be factors that will, ironically, support the continuance of a distinctive, highly visible Puerto Rican community in the U. S. It is clear that the Puerto Rican community in the U. S. will change, just as it is clear that the Puerto Rican communities in the U. S. have changed, from what they were before. It is clear that the communities will have also changed in relation to each other. The nature and causes of this change should be studied, not the probability of change.

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